

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 363 929

EA 025 398

AUTHOR Edlefson, Carla
TITLE Balancing the Substantive with the Political Agenda:
A Case Study.
PUB DATE 30 Oct 93
NOTE 36p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the
University Council for Educational Administration
(7th, Houston, TX, October 27-31, 1993).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports -
Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Change; *Educational Legislation;
*Educational Policy; Elementary Secondary Education;
*Governance; *Policy Formation; *Politics of
Education; School Restructuring; State Government;
*State Legislation; State Officials
IDENTIFIERS *Ohio

ABSTRACT

This paper presents findings of a case study that examined the influences that shaped an Ohio governor's education reform proposals from a vantage point inside the governor's office, during the late 1980s. Data were obtained through document analysis (of the period from fall 1987 to January 1989), interviews with the governor, and a literature review. Three theoretical frameworks are used to analyze the governor's agenda-setting actions: Light's (1991) analysis of policy costs; Ripley and Franklin's (1980) concept of the subgovernment; and Kingdon's (1984) policy windows. Under the headings of "credit versus content" and "credibility versus control," several conclusions are made. First, policy entrepreneurs who are ready with reform proposals when the policy window opens are likely to get their proposals enacted. Second, the following outcomes are likely when the iron triangle of subgovernment is broken: Education representatives have no more credibility than anyone else; they may have less credibility; nobody is completely in control; and politicians know how to jump ahead of the process and look like leaders. Two tables are included. (LMI)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

EA

Balancing the Agenda

ED 363 929

BALANCING THE SUBSTANTIVE WITH THE POLITICAL AGENDA:

A CASE STUDY

Carla Edlefsen
College of Education
The Ohio State University

Paper presented to the annual meeting of the
University Council on Educational Administration
Houston, Texas

October 30, 1993

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve
reproduction quality.

* Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-
ment do not necessarily represent official
OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

C. Edlefsen

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC).

EA 025398

BALANCING THE SUBSTANTIVE WITH THE POLITICAL AGENDA:

A CASE STUDY

The 1980's were years when education became a highly visible political issue and when many elected officials attempted to take advantage of this fact by associating themselves with education reform. In recent years studies of educational policy have shown an increasing interest in understanding the policy-making process at the state level. Most studies of policy-making assume a "bird's-eye" vantage point, working with a theoretical framework that follows the process from the issue articulation stage through enactment (eg. Mazzoni, 1991). However, there has been little attention paid in the literature to the political agenda for education from inside the process.

This study was designed to address that gap by examining the influences that shaped one governor's education reform proposals, from a vantage point inside the governor's office. It considers the governor's political agenda for education, as that agenda is being formed. The premise underlying this study is that educators need to understand the policy process from an inside perspective, in order to gain a more realistic picture of the process and in order to influence the policy outcomes more effectively.

Methodology, Data Sources, and Approach

Studies of the education policy-making process at the state level have shown that governors are major players¹ (see for example, Marshall, Mitchell, and Wirt, 1986; Mazzoni, 1989 and 1991; Chance, 1986). In fact, as more governors have undertaken leadership of education reform initiatives, their influence on policy outcomes has also grown (Mazzoni, 1991). One of the reasons governors are influential, once they decide to become involved in educational policy, is that gubernatorial proposals set the agenda by framing the ensuing policy debate (Rosenthal, 1990).

Agenda decisions are complex and context-specific (for example, see Light 1991). Fuhrman and Elmore (1990) have called for more in depth research on governors' strategies in education reform. The research questions guiding this study are those suggested by Fuhrman and Elmore (1990, p.4):

1. What strategies did the governor use to assume policy leadership on education reform?
2. What strengths did the governor bring to this role?
3. What limits and opportunities did the governor encounter as he attempted to set and control the policy agenda?
4. What are the implications for understanding the education policy-making process and for affecting the outcomes of that process?

The methodology chosen was a qualitative case study, based on participant observation (see, for example McPherson, 1972; Yin, 1984). This method has the advantage of access to data about the governor's decision processes that are neither in public view nor necessarily obtainable by asking for his or her own reflections.

The author was education policy staff advisor to the governor of Ohio in the late 1980's, at a time when the governor proposed and the legislature enacted major education reform. The data were collected over an 18-month period and consist of extensive memos, notes from meetings, calendars, political polling data, and newspaper articles. In addition, the governor was interviewed after he had left office, to obtain his reflections on his decisions after the urgencies of the moment had passed.

The method of data analysis was first to construct a chronology and look for patterns in the data (Patton, 1980; Peshkin, 1985). This study focused on a two-year period, beginning in 1987 and ending with the governor's announcement of his reform package in his 1989 state of the state message and budget submission. The chronological benchmarks are presented in Table 1. Other data patterns included the governor's activities, which were designed to heighten awareness of the need for education reform, and the reaction to them.

Table 1

Chronological Benchmarks

Autumn 1987	Planning a strategy
January 1988	State of the state message
Throughout 1988	Pursuit of three strategies
September 1988	Leaked report of the Education 2000 Commission
November 1988	Presidential and legislative election
January 1989	State of the state message and budget submission

Second, the literatures on presidential and gubernatorial policy agendas, as well as on state education policy processes, were reviewed. (eg., Light, 1991; Morehouse, 1976; Spitzer, 1983). Theories from the literature were used as a framework for examining the data. Questions posed by the literature prompted further digging into archival data. Rival explanatory schemes were used in analyzing data and drawing conclusions (Patton, 1980).

The remainder of this paper is organized into three sections. The first section provides background on why Governor Celeste decided to mount an education reform initiative; next the governor's education reform strategy and his activities implementing that strategy are described. Third, the data are discussed in terms of the literature on

agenda setting, and the final section contains implications for educators who wish to influence state policy making.

Celeste's Second Term Agenda

In Celeste's first term, the governor, a Democrat, and the legislature, controlled by Democrats, raised the personal income tax substantially. But opponents of the tax increase were able to place a repeal referendum before the voters in November 1983. Although the repeal effort was unsuccessful, Republicans, campaigning on the tax issue, gained control of the Ohio Senate the next year. As a result, taxes were cut, canceling the tax increases Celeste had fought to enact and to protect from repeal in 1983. Thus he had virtually no money for new programs for his first budget of the second term².

There were probably several reasons why Celeste chose education as a policy priority for his second term. First, he didn't want to be a powerless lame duck, dealing with a strong General Assembly. Both houses of the Ohio General Assembly had special committees studying education problems during 1987 and 1988. Celeste's own ambitious, controversial reform would keep him in the public eye and help him retain the initiative.

Second, Celeste was a liberal, reform governor. He surrounded himself with staff and advisors who were reform-minded and motivated by social change. They had the political and the technical expertise to

put together a successful campaign. A school reform campaign would keep their skills honed and keep them on the Celeste team, instead of looking for other campaigns on which to work.

Third, Celeste had Presidential ambitions, and he seriously considered running in 1988. However, when he determined in 1987 that it was too late to put together a national campaign, an Ohio "campaign" for education reform became attractive. It would allow him to travel around the state giving campaign-style speeches, something that he did very well. And it would enable him to keep his campaign organization interested and busy working for him.

Fourth, the fact that other governors, such as Riley in South Carolina, Alexander in Tennessee, and Orr in Indiana, had led successful tax increase/school reform initiatives, and also the education reform emphasis of the National Governors' Association, influenced the thinking of Governor Celeste and his staff.

Fifth, public opinion polls throughout the 1980's, both in Ohio and nationally, showed that people were concerned about the quality of education. In December 1987, as part of his decision-making process, Celeste commissioned his political pollsters to survey Ohio voters. The poll results showed that the economy was still at the top of voters' agenda in Ohio, with education and long-term care of the elderly tied

Balancing the Agenda

7

for second, suggesting that a campaign message combining these elements could be successful.

When respondents were asked about their satisfaction with public education in Ohio, 41% were positive about schools, while 56% were negative. An impressive 63% believed that Ohio's public education system was "falling short" in "making sure students learn the basic skills, like reading and writing".

More than 40% of the respondents said they were "very willing" or "somewhat willing" to support a state tax increase for each of the following educational purposes: 1) remedial programs for elementary students who need special help in the basics; 2) improved teaching of science, math, and computer skills; 3) financial assistance for adults who want to return to school or get additional job training (G. Garin, personal communication, January 11, 1988).

Finally, another reason that Celeste decided on an education reform initiative was that he loved challenges. Interviewed in 1992, he observed, "It was going to be hard to get anything through the legislature, but that was not a reason not to try" (R.F. Celeste, personal communication, April 13, 1992).

In that same interview, Celeste said education was a priority in the first term, but the key issue then was to stabilize funding and deal with the budget problem. In contrast he said that education reform was

his priority for the second term. Nevertheless, the reality was that any reforms requiring major additional funding in the second term would also have required a tax increase.

The Governor's Strategy

Increasing taxes is always politically difficult, let alone at the end of a governor's second (and last) term. Because it seemed impossible to expect the legislature to enact a tax increase, a plan to go directly to the voters in a referendum was attractive (internal staff memo, January 7, 1988). A referendum in November 1988 might also have helped increase voter turnout, usually an advantage for Democrats.

Between April 1987 and December 1988, staff, and in one case Celeste himself, wrote 17 detailed political strategy memos on how to accomplish education reform. These memos were circulated and discussed internally. There were also 25 strategy meetings, 14 of which included the governor. Celeste's advisors for these efforts included staff, cabinet officers, Celeste family members, a few legislators, and political advisors from outside government. Celeste and his advisors invested a great deal of time and effort to develop and think through a strategy that would bring the substantive policy and politics of education reform into alignment.

At one strategy session Celeste noted that, "people don't know that the governor has made education a priority, that there is a crisis,

or that we need anything other than money." He said one goal of an education reform awareness campaign should be "a thousand people who agree with the governor to change education in a fundamental way. Engage the opinion makers in the process....We have to tell people why things have to change" (R.F. Celeste, personal communication, February 18, 1988).

Another time he said:

"We have to be careful not to set ourselves up. We must make sure that as many options as possible are left open. We have to demonstrate sufficient strength. Where are the votes that we need to win?....We must decide who to mobilize, who to neutralize.

"Pile up the kindling and light a match. Then the legislators will jump in. I want people clamoring. I want a good voter turnout in November" (R.F. Celeste, personal communication, March 3, 1988).

Three strategies emerged from this planning, all aimed at making the climate more favorable for education reform. The first was the creation of a blue ribbon commission; the second was the organization of the governor's time into a "campaign mode," and the third was the floating of "trial balloons."

Blue Ribbon Commission

Celeste's first impulse was to get the best thinking of top experts on the content of education reform. In fall 1987, Celeste asked staff to set up a meeting "with 3 or 4 of the most creative people nationally. They would take a 3-day week-end and come up with a fresh, creative (education) reform package" (C. Edlefson, personal communication, August 7, 1987).

The governor chose not to meet with the State Superintendent or the state's organized interest groups to get their input or talk about strategy. He wanted an outsider's perspective, not proposals from self-interested lobby groups. A group of national experts did come to Columbus at the governor's invitation. Except for the State Superintendent and the Chancellor, local interest group leaders were not invited. But the ideas that the experts came up with were not the ideas Celeste thought he needed.

So Celeste formed another group by announcing in his 1988 state of the state message the creation of the Education 2000 Commission. He named retired chair of Procter & Gamble, Owen B. "Brad" Butler as chair of the Commission, and Steven A. Minter, Director of the Cleveland Foundation, as vice chair.

Butler wanted the Commission to be made up entirely of corporate CEO's, but Celeste insisted that women, minorities and representatives

of education groups, as well as legislators, had to be represented on the Commission. Celeste insisted that Superintendent Walter and Chancellor Coulter be ex-officio members of the Commission. Perhaps he wanted them to get it straight from business' mouth that there wasn't going to be more money for education unless there were some other changes.³

The Commission held seven meetings and four public hearings between February and November 1988. The final report contained 54 recommendations (Ohio Education 2000, 1988). Of the major ones, as reported in the newspapers, four emphasized improving financial support of education; two addressed expanding educational programs for disadvantaged students; and one advocated school choice. (Lowe, 1988b; Johnson, 1988).

The Campaign Strategy

In March and April 1988, Celeste and Lt. Governor Paul Leonard visited at least 17 communities, giving speeches or conducting public forums on education. Together or separately, they visited every major city and many of the smaller cities and towns. Legislators of both parties were usually present. In fall 1988, Celeste's communications staff produced several radio and television call-in shows, carried by a number of stations around the state.

Interviewed in 1992, Celeste reflected on the impact of his travel and his radio and TV shows during 1988.

I don't think it had a whole lot of effect on the legislature. I think it had some effect on the public, although I have no way of gauging that. I believe the public became more demanding -- raised their expectations about education (R.F. Celeste, personal communication, April 13, 1992).

The Trial Balloon Strategy

One of the problems in the Education 2000 Commission was how to have a public debate about money and taxes, since legislators serving on the Commission were running for re-election. They didn't want to be publicly linked with tax increase proposals. Someone "leaked" a draft of the Education 2000 Commission report to a Columbus Dispatch reporter in September. The resulting article hinted that recommendations for tax increases were coming (Yost, 1988a). The Governor was not unhappy to have the story out before the election. As early as March, he had told staff, "It's O.K. for the Commission to talk about price tags" (R.F. Celeste, personal communication, March 23, 1988).

In September, Celeste decided to begin talking about the possibility of a tax increase. Front page articles on September 20 in both the Akron and Dayton newspapers reported that Celeste would "defer to the coming recommendations of his Education 2000 Commission", but

that he "may recommend higher taxes in January to increase state support for education" ("Celeste Leans," 1988, p. 1A).

The leaked report and Celeste's hints were successful in bringing the debate about whether a tax increase was needed out into the open during the election season. A Columbus Dispatch column said "the specter of tax hikes is creeping into Statehouse campaigns" (Yost, 1988b). In the November 1988 election Republicans strengthened their control of the Ohio Senate by winning two more seats. On November 13, the Dispatch ran a cartoon showing a small Celeste pushing a huge bundle marked "Taxes" up a steep hill.

Celeste's Proposal

By the first of December it was clear that Celeste and the legislature were saying there had to be a ballot issue if there were going to be a tax increase. At the same time, the Ohio Education Association (OEA) and the school superintendents were saying that a ballot issue would be more detrimental than helpful (Browning, 1988; Fisher, 1988b; Mertz, 1988).

In his State of the State message on January 10, 1989, Governor Celeste presented his recommendations. They included an educational excellence trust fund, created by a constitutional amendment requiring voter approval; and an increase of one percent in both the personal income and corporate franchise tax rates, earmarked by the

constitutional amendment for the trust fund. The trust fund would have an independent board of trustees. The new revenue, estimated to be about \$800 million the first year, would be distributed one-third by formula to local school districts, one-third to higher education, and one-third to new programs in primary and secondary education.

Other parts of the package included deregulating the schools, and open enrollment (school choice). There would be new programs to ensure that all children master the basic skills by the third grade, to attract and retain the best teachers, and for early childhood education. New task forces would study educational governance, administrative efficiency, and ways to reform Ohio's property tax for schools. All of these proposals were contained in the Education 2000 Commission's recommendations.

Interviewed after he left office, Celeste's comments on the origins of some of the elements of his proposal reflect his frustration with the education establishment.

Early childhood was widely discussed around the country, recommended by {National Governors' Association} and in the Commission report. I believed in it. But it didn't come from the Department of Education.

The trust fund was my idea because we needed to get away from just putting more money into the existing education formula,

where we'd never see it. This was also based on the Commission's report.

The governance proposal was in there because of my frustration--the system didn't work (R. F. Celeste, personal communication, April 13, 1992).

Reaction to Celeste's Proposal. As the details of the Celeste initiative were spelled out over the next few weeks through a meeting with legislative leaders ("Celeste Provides," 1989) and in his budget submission, there seemed to be something in the package for each of the education interests to hate. State Superintendent of Schools Walter and the university presidents objected to the trust fund having a separate board of directors (Associated Press, 1989a; Carmen, 1989; Holthaus, 1989).

Local school superintendents and the OEA did not want to have to run a statewide campaign in order to get an increase in state funds. Their objection was not unreasonable, because even if the statewide initiative passed, they would still need to campaign for voter approval of local property tax increases for schools as well ("Educators", 1989; de Souza, 1989; Associated Press, 1989b; Penix, 1989).

Chancellor Coulter had been supportive of the idea of going to a statewide ballot and had kept quiet about the trust fund board. But he blasted the Governor when he saw the budget, because in it higher

education would get no increases for the biennium unless the statewide referendum passed (Lowe, 1989a; Associated Press, 1989c).

Editorial comments varied, but they reflected three important points of disagreement: one, whether there should be a tax increase; two, whether a tax increase proposal should go to referendum or be decided in the legislature; and three, whether the accountability mechanism should be a trust fund with a separate board, or some other form ("Ohio's Taxing," 1989; "Paying," 1989; "Momentum," 1989; "State", 1989; "New Direction," 1989; "Gov. Celeste," 1989).

Legislative Outcomes

The governor decided to have his education reform legislation introduced separately from the biennial appropriations (budget) bill. Two Democratic House members refused his personal request to sponsor the bills⁴; finally, the chair of the House Appropriations committee agreed to introduce them as a courtesy. Although the Ohio Federation of Teachers and the Ohio Public Schools Employees Association endorsed the proposals, the OEA, the State Superintendent, and the other education groups continued to oppose it. Celeste never gave the go-ahead to an externally-funded, organized campaign to secure passage in the legislature, despite many internal staff memos and discussions about how to do it. He didn't proceed with the referendum campaign, because the two most likely sources of campaign funds, the OEA and the business

community, were not likely to produce the necessary financial support. The governor's bills were not enacted.

In the meantime, the Republican Senate President incorporated the no-and low-cost provisions of the Education 2000 report into another bill (SB 140) he sponsored himself. Introduced as a measure to strengthen accountability, the bill's chief provisions as enacted were an extensive, new, statewide educational management information system, some open enrollment (choice) options, and a mandate for the State Board of Education to conduct a program of rewards and sanctions for "excellent and deficient" schools. The education groups opposed most of SB 140. While they were able to secure some amendments to the bill, they were unable to stop it, or to defeat some of its more burdensome (to them) provisions.

The state budget as enacted contained only minor increases for educational subsidy formulas, but a new \$90 million "Education Improvement Fund" was included. Schools would write innovative proposals to receive these funds. The governor would control the fund's oversight committee. Preschool and Head Start received \$38 million of these funds, the first state funding ever for preschool programs. Thus Celeste got a scaled-down version of some of his reform plan. He considered his initiative at least a partial victory.

Discussion and Implications

By January 1989, Governor Celeste had successfully raised public expectations that he would propose a major education initiative in his state of the state address. However he had not been successful in bringing together the political support that he hoped to have. The reforms the governor chose were opposed by educational interest groups and the education bureaucracy, yet he proposed them anyway. Why? And given the opposition, why did the legislature enact many of them?

Minimizing Political Costs

Some theories borrowed from research on U.S. presidents are helpful in understanding why Governor Celeste made the choice he did.⁵ Paul Light's study (1991) of six presidents looks in depth at the process by which presidents select elements of their domestic policy proposals. He concludes that presidents make these decisions in such a way as to minimize "political costs," taking into account a) potential for legislative success; b) the likelihood of cooperation of the bureaucracy; and c) public opinion. Program effectiveness, that is whether or not the proposal will work once enacted, is not particularly important in these decisions. This same kind of analysis of political costs helps explain the Celeste decision.

Potential for Legislative Success. Even after a year of Celeste's campaigning, trial balloons, and a blue ribbon commission, legislators

repeatedly told reporters that there was little sentiment for raising taxes among their colleagues (Lowe, 1988c; White, 1988). Legislators on the Education 2000 Commission told reporters that the only way to get the income tax increase was to put it on the statewide ballot (Fisher, 1988a).

Once the November 1988 mid-term election was over, legislative leadership's public statements suggested they were open-minded and testing the political winds about taxes. The Democratic House Speaker talked about the possibility of a statewide referendum with reporters, and the Republican Senate President didn't rule out a tax increase, although he said it would be hard to get one passed in the legislature (Lowe and Yost, 1988). The Governor and the Speaker had talked privately about how a ballot issue might be done. (Lowe, 1988a).

Likelihood of Cooperation of Bureaucracy and Interest Groups. One of the chief purposes of the blue ribbon commission strategy was to gain agreement among all the various interests, including the legislators, on the elements of an education reform package. But from the time Brad Butler agreed to chair the Education 2000 Commission, he knew what the final report should say. With reform on his mind, he believed any new money should go only for new programs. The K-12 education interest groups and state agency representatives, however, believed schools were grossly under-funded and that no new programs should be enacted until

current programs were sufficiently funded. The challenge was to bring these two views together (C. Edlefsen, personal communication, May 5, 1988), but the Commission failed to do this.

Butler did not run the Commission meetings in a way that encouraged free debate and compromise. As a result, some of the education lobbyists did not believe that the Commission was really the place where issues would be decided (Fowler, 1992). The Commission report contained several dissenting footnotes, all from the education representatives.

Public Opinion. Public opinion on a tax increase for education was still neutral at the end of 1988. Despite Celeste's efforts to get public opinion behind his reform efforts, opinion polls showed little change (see Table 2).

There was insufficient public support to persuade the legislative leadership to allow a tax increase to come to a vote in the General Assembly. There was evidence, however, that the public would prefer to vote a tax increase up or down themselves, rather than have the legislature make the decisions. Public opinion was receptive to combining education reform with a tax increase.

Interviewed after he was out of office, Celeste described the problem from his point of view:

Table 2

Ohio Voters Opinions on Higher Taxes for Education: Results of Three Surveys

Response	Percent of respondents		
	Garin-Hart Dec. 1987	Garin-Hart Sept. 1988	Gallup Dec. 1988
Definitely in favor	17%	20%	19%
Probably in favor	36	45	40
Probably against	19	15	18
Definitely against	17	11	20
Not sure	11	9	--
N of respondents	705	959	801

Note. The questions in the two Garin-Hart polls were the same: "If there were a measure on the ballot for a 500 million dollar state tax increase to fund an education improvement program having the elements I just described, how would you vote...?" The question in the Gallup Poll was would you be "willing to pay higher taxes to provide more money for the public schools?" Also the Gallup survey did not allow people to respond "not sure."

SOURCES: Garin-Hart, 1987, 1988; Gallup 1988a

Public opinion would have supported more taxes for education, but not for more of the same education. But no one (among the education lobby groups) from the State Superintendent to the Ohio Education Association--with the possible exception of the Ohio Federation of Teachers -- bought that proposition (R.F. Celeste, personal communication, April 13, 1992).

Thus, in January 1989, as Governor Celeste assessed the political costs of his education reform and tax package, he found that the chances of success in the legislature were nil for a legislatively voted tax increase, but a referendum to be put to the voters of the state was still a possibility. The likelihood of cooperation from the bureaucracy and interest groups was good from higher education, but not good from primary-secondary education. Public opinion was at least neutral, and at best receptive to hearing the arguments tying reform to funding. Celeste chose to keep his options open in the legislature and to take his lumps from educators.

This case study supports Light's theory that in choosing elements of an agenda, a governor tries to minimize political costs, through an assessment of success with the legislature, the bureaucracy/interest groups and public opinion. However in the Celeste case, the constraints imposed by what the legislature would support seemed most influential on the governor's agenda. His proposal would at least be considered by the

legislature, although it was opposed by the education interests. In other words, this governor determined that the political costs of either no agenda or an agenda that was "dead on arrival" in the legislature were higher than the political costs of angering the education interests.

The Subgovernment

The concept of the subgovernment (Ripley and Franklin, 1980) seems particularly appropriate for analyzing state education policy making (Mazzoni, 1991). The idea of the subgovernment is that most policy decisions most of the time are relatively routine and noncontroversial, and therefore are made by a rather invisible group that includes legislators whose committees have jurisdiction, the relevant bureaucrats, and affected interest groups. Sometimes this arrangement is called an "iron triangle," because of the tight control over one sphere of influence by a relatively small group. Policy making in the subsystem is incremental and has a status quo bias (Mazzoni 1991, 1989).

Taking control of the policy agenda away from the subsystem depends on creating visibility and controversy over issues in their sphere of influence (Hays, 1990; Mazzoni, 1991; Ripley & Franklin, 1980), and this is where governors have an advantage. Many scholars have recognized the agenda-setting power of the governor or the president, and the importance of the executive's understanding of how to

use it as a resource (see for example, Hays, 1990; Mazzoni, 1991 and 1989; Pipho, 1991; Rosenthal, 1990; Schneider, 1989; Spitzer, 1983). One way that the governor can set the agenda is by using his or her formal authority to propose a budget and deliver an annual state of the state report, but the governor's superior access to the media is also a very powerful tool for controlling the agenda.

In the Celeste case, the governor's decisions to put education reform at the top of his own agenda and to float the idea of a tax increase created the kind of visibility and controversy that took the control of the content of the reforms out of the hands of the "iron triangle." But the governor was not completely in control, either. As Kingdon (1984) notes, the power of the interest groups in such situations sometimes is a negative, or veto, power. The Celeste case illustrates that kind of veto power, in that the interest groups successfully vetoed the ballot issue and trust fund proposals.

Policy Windows

However, education interest groups were not able to veto very many of the reforms recommended by the Education 2000 Commission. The passage of legislation (SB 140) that many educators found distasteful can probably be attributed to the alignment of public opinion with legislative support, and to the availability of specific proposals, *ie.*, Education 2000 Commission recommendations (Light, 1991; Kingdon, 1984).

In both Light's and Kingdon's theories, the convergence of the policy and political processes at the time when a policy window opens results in legislation successfully enacted. The policy window opened for the reform proposals, but not for the tax increase nor the trust fund proposals.

Whether the metaphor is one of a window opening or of an arena (Mazzoni, 1991), there is a sense in which the policy-making process has inertia. Once it gets going, it proceeds without regard to who may or may not be prepared for the outcomes. If the policy window opens, something will go through. Ideas that are available at the time will be the ones that are used to fashion the new policies. Therefore, those who are ready with ideas-- Kingdon calls them policy entrepreneurs--are more likely to see their ideas become policies.

Implications for Educators Who Want to Influence Policy

The Celeste case is only one case, although the facts and patterns are consistent with the literature on agenda setting and policy making. While no claims are made for the generalizability of this case, some speculation about possible implications is in order. These speculations are summarized under 4 "c-words": credit v. content, and credibility v. control.

Credit v. Content

In this case, when the governor was determined to initiate education reform, he was able to set the agenda, and some legislation was passed, if not the legislation he proposed. From the governor's point of view, the education initiative was successful. It kept him in the news all through 1988 and much of 1989, helping him avoid becoming a lame duck governor by making him a leader on a popular political issue. It gave him and his staff a campaign to work on. A number of reforms were enacted, including a \$90 million fund to support innovations. In the end, Celeste received political credit for making progress toward improving education, in public opinion, in the media, and in the legislature (see, for example, Lowe, 1989b).

Although he was sincere in trying to improve education, the governor did not start with his mind made up about which specific reform proposals to espouse. He was biased against proposals from established education interest groups, but he did consult with national experts. He tried out a lot of his own ideas about education in his speeches and radio and TV programs. He listened carefully to feedback. Substantively, the reforms contained in the report of the Education 2000 Commission were the basis for the changes that were eventually enacted, even though the commission members were lukewarm about their own report. The Commission report was an assemblage of reform ideas prevalent

nationally, and it had the stamp of approval of the blue ribbon commissioners. It was drafted into legislation.

Implication 1: Politicians usually respect expertise and are not very ideological. When the agenda is set for reform, political credibility requires that reform happen. Political credit is given for doing something, more than for the specifics of what is done. Therefore those policy entrepreneurs who are ready with reform proposals when the policy window opens, are likely to get their proposals enacted.

Credibility v. Control

Celeste did believe in the accountability movement. He became convinced that people would support higher taxes for education as long as there were assurances that more money would lead to better education. The more he talked publicly about education reform, the more he became convinced that educators were part of the problem. They wanted more money, but they did not want to do what was required to gain public support, in his view. He believed he was giving them a chance to secure additional funding and to make beneficial change, and they weren't seizing the opportunity.

Celeste became increasingly frustrated with the State Superintendent and the interest groups because he thought they were resisting change. A similar frustration was prevalent in the

legislature (Fowler, 1992). More and more, educators became part of the problem, and their credibility declined.

On the other hand, educators were equally frustrated with Butler and the Education 2000 Commission. Some educators were ready with proposals, but Butler didn't give them a forum. He ignored their legitimate concerns about proposals he championed. Thus the content of the reform legislation was determined in an arena--the Education 2000 Commission--that educators did not accept as legitimate. Had they accepted it, or had the commission chair accepted the challenge of forging a compromise, the results might have been different. While educators did not view the Commission as legitimate, the Commission report carried great legitimacy with the governor, the legislature, and the media.

Governor Celeste successfully set the agenda and framed the debate. He was not able to control the outcomes. In fact, he tried to leave his options open, so that whatever the outcome, he could take credit. Legislative leaders did the same. For example, they didn't trash the governor's tax proposals; neither did they ever have to vote on them.

Implication 2: When the iron triangle is broken, a) education representatives have no more credibility than anyone else; b) they may

have less; c) nobody is completely in control; d) politicians know how to jump ahead of the process and look like leaders.

Systemic Reform

The public and their elected representatives are convinced that there is something very wrong with public schools. So convinced, politicians are reluctant to ask for reform proposals from the people who are currently in charge of the problem. As long as the name of the game is reform, educators have low credibility in the policy-making process. The situation becomes further complicated when educators become frustrated because it seems no one listens to their informed opinion.

Justifying funding on the basis of improving educational outcomes is a new challenge for educators. It is the real revolution. Specifying what the outcomes should be is problematic politically. Knowing how to achieve desired outcomes is problematic technically. Nevertheless, educators must accept the challenge of steering, rather than trying to resist, reform. They must determine what policies are best and continue to try to convince whomever will listen. There is no more important education problem.

In this respect, the notion of "systemic reform" (eg. Fuhrman and Elmore, 1990) has promise. It is a national movement that advocates linking various reform proposals together toward improving educational

outcomes. By promoting a comprehensive approach, systemic reform is an attempt to head off piecemeal reform efforts that may be not only ineffective, but harmful. Advocates of systemic reform are attempting to build a national consensus on good education reform policies that may be seen by politicians as independent of local established education interests. Perhaps systemic reform proposals will be available the next time a policy window opens in Ohio.

NOTES

1. See Fuhrman and Elmore (1990) for a discussion of the reasons why governors have become more involved in education policy in recent years.
2. Ohio's state budget is for a two-year period. Thus, a governor presents a budget to the legislature twice during a four-year term, in January of the odd-numbered years. Ohio governors are limited to two consecutive four-year terms.
3. Walter headed the "Education Coalition", made up of the ten major state K-12 education lobby groups. The Coalition had publicly called for raising all the major state taxes in order to fund education. Privately Celeste told Walter that an education proposal needed "something controversial besides the money. If people hear that we are proposing that sales, income and property taxes are all going up, they'll say forget it" (R.F. Celeste, personal communication, October 3, 1988).
4. There were two pieces of legislation. One was a joint resolution calling for a referendum on a constitutional amendment to create the trust fund. The other was a conventional House bill that would have created the other parts of the plan and appropriated the money.
5. Other students of the office of governor have similarly borrowed from the literature on the presidency (see for example, Gross, 1989). While policy making processes at the state and federal levels are obviously different, there are some similarities. For example, the president proposes initiatives, the Congress enacts or rejects them. At the state level, the governor proposes, the legislature disposes. The partisan political factors--for example, whether the president/governor and leadership of the Congress/legislature are of the same party--are similar. There are powerful bureaucracies and interest groups that participate at both levels.

References

- Associated Press. (1989a, January 10). State superintendent opposes panel to disburse tax money. The Plain Dealer, p. 2-B.
- Associated Press. (1989b, January 12). School groups want legislature to bite bullet on tax increase. Akron Beacon Journal, p. D-3.
- Associated Press. (1989c, January 27). Celeste budget plan upsets regents. Akron Beacon Journal, p. D-3.
- Browning, D.L. (1988, November 28). Local school officials rap state legislature. Southeast Messenger, p. 1.
- Carmen, B. (1989, January 10). State board doesn't want help spending. The Columbus Dispatch, p. 2-B.
- Celeste leans toward tax hike to aid schools. (1988, September 20). Akron Beacon Journal, p. 1-A.
- Celeste provides some details on proposed education tax. (1989, January 12). Gongwer News Service: Ohio Report, 59 (8), pp. 1-4.
- Chance, W. (1986). "...the best of educations": Reforming America's public schools in the 1980's. John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.
- deSouza, B. (1989, January 11). City schools chief criticizes governor's plan. Youngstown Vindicator, p. 1.
- Educators have asked for too much additional funding, Riffe says. (1989a, January 11). Gongwer News Service: Ohio Report, 59 (7), pp. 1-3.
- Fisher, M. (1988a, November 29). 1% can make difference, panel says. Dayton Daily News, p. B-5.
- Fisher, M. (1988b, December 5). Let legislators raise school tax, some say. Dayton Daily News, p. B-3.
- Fowler, F.C. (1992, April). An application of Mazzoni's arena models to the passage of Ohio's S.B. 140: A preliminary

study. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco.

Fuhrman, S. H. & Elmore, R.F. (1990, October). Governors and education policy in the 1990s. Paper prepared for the annual research conference of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, San Francisco.

The Gallup Organization, Inc. (1988, December). Ohio education survey, 1988. Prepared for the Office of the Governor.

Garin-Hart Strategic Research Group. (1987, December). Survey of Ohio voters.

Garin-Hart Strategic Research Group. (1988, September). Survey of Ohio voters.

Gov. Celeste should just say education's not accountable. (1989, January 14). Dayton Daily News, p. A-12.

Gross, D.A. (1989). Governors and policymaking: Theoretical concerns and analytic approaches. Policy Studies Journal, 17, 764-787.

Hays, R.A. (1990). The president, congress, and the formation of housing policy: A reexamination of redistributive policy-making. Policy Studies Journal, 18, 847-869.

Holthaus, T. (1989, January 15). Area educators wary of relying on income tax. The Plain Dealer, p. 4-B.

Johnson, M.F. (1988, November 29). Paying for better schools. The Cincinnati Enquirer, pp. A-1, A-16.

Kingdon, J.W. 1984. Agendas, alternatives and public policies. Harper Collins.

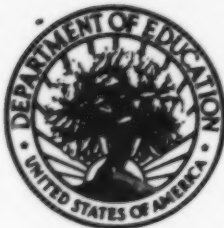
Light, P. C. (1991). The president's agenda. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Lowe, R.K. (1988a, November 28). Celeste knows good schools aren't free. The Columbus Dispatch, pp. 1-D, 2-D.

Lowe, R.K. (1988b, November 29). Additional 1% income tax urged for schools. The Columbus Dispatch, p. 1-D.

- Lowe, R.K. (1988c, December 7). Celeste 'comfortable' in taking tax hike to voters. The Columbus Dispatch, p. 5-E.
- Lowe, R.K. (1989a, January 27). Celeste accused of slighting colleges. The Columbus Dispatch, p. 11-C.
- Lowe, R.K. (1989b, July 2). The selling of education. The Columbus Dispatch, p. 4-D.
- Lowe, R.K. & Yost, M. (1988, November 16). Assembly may dump school tax issue on voters. The Columbus Dispatch, pp. 1-A, 2-A.
- Marshall, C., Mitchell, D., & Wirt, F. (1986). The context of state-level policy formation. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 8, 347-378.
- Mazzoni, T. L., (1989). Governors as policy leaders for education: A Minnesota comparison. Educational Policy, 3, 79-90.
- Mazzoni, T. L. (1991). Analyzing state school policymaking: An arena model. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 13, 115-138.
- McPherson, G. H. (1972) Small Town Teacher. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Mertz, M. (1988, December 21). School officials urge legislators to pass tax. Mansfield News Journal, p. 4-A.
- Momentum in higher education good, but must be sustained. (1989, January 12). Dayton Daily News, p. A-10.
- Morehouse, S.M. (1976). The governor as political leader. In H. Jacob & K. N. Vines (Eds.), Politics in the American states. Boston: Little, Brown.
- New direction for schools. (1989, January 9). The Cincinnati Post, p. 1-A.
- Ohio Education 2000 Commission. (1988, December). A game plan for national championship for Ohio's public schools: A report to Governor Richard F. Celeste. Columbus, OH: Author.

- Ohio's taxing future. (1989, January 8). Akron Beacon Journal, p. D-2.
- Patton, M. Q. (1980). Qualitative evaluation methods. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Paying for education. (1988, December 1). The Call and Post, p. 6-A.
- Penix, L. (1989, January 19). Celeste plan may hurt levy bids, schools fear. The Cincinnati Post, p. 3-A.
- Peshkin, A. (1985). From title to title: The evolution of perspective in naturalistic inquiry. Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 16, 214-224.
- Pipho, C. (1991). On becoming an education governor. Phi Delta Kappan, 72, 656-657.
- Ripley, R.B. & Franklin, G.A. (1980). Congress, the bureaucracy and public policy. Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press.
- Rosenthal, A. (1990). Governors and legislatures: Contending powers. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly.
- Schneider, S. K. (1989). Governors and health care policy in the American states. Policy Studies Journal, 17, 909-926.
- Spitzer, R. J. (1983). The presidency and public policy. University, AL: University of Alabama Press.
- State of the state address. (1989, January 9). The Plain Dealer, p. 12-A.
- White, R. (1988, December 13). Celeste bolsters school tax effort. The Cincinnati Post, p. 2-A.
- Yin, R. (1984). Case study research. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Yost, M. (1988a, September 18). Education panel says sacrifices needed. The Columbus Dispatch, p. 6-B.
- Yost, M. (1988b, October 2). 'T word' soon may be spoken aloud in statehouse. The Columbus Dispatch, p. 4-C.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

EA 025 398



REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title BALANCING THE SUBSTANTIVE WITH THE POLITICAL AGENDA: A CASE STUDY	
Author(s) CARLA EDLEFSON	
Corporate Source THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY	Publication Date OCT 30, 1993

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic/optical media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS) or other ERIC vendors. Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following options and sign the release below.



Sample sticker to be affixed to document

Sample sticker to be affixed to document



Check here

Permitting
microfiche
(4" x 6" film),
paper copy,
electronic,
and optical media
reproduction

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

Level 1

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER
COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

Level 2

or here

Permitting
reproduction
in other than
paper copy

Sign Here, Please

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits. If permission to reproduce is granted, but neither box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

"I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic/optical media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries."	
Signature: <i>Carla Edlefsen</i>	Position: ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
Printed Name: CARLA EDLEFSON	Organization: THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
Address: 301 RAMSEYER HALL 29 W. WOODRUFF AVE. COLUMBUS, OH 43210-1177	Telephone Number: (614) 292-7700
	Date: NOV 4, 1993

OVER

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of this document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents which cannot be made available through EDRS).

Publisher/Distributor:	
Address:	
Price Per Copy:	Quantity Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name and address of current copyright/reproduction rights holder:	
Name	N.A.
Address	

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse	ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management ATTN: Acquisitions University of Oregon 1787 Agate St. Eugene, OR 97403
--	--

If you are making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, you may return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Facility
1301 Piccard Drive, Suite 300
Rockville, Maryland 20850-4305
Telephone: (301) 258-5500